

Illegal Mining

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The book “Global Outlook; Crime, Money and Power in the Contemporary Society” by Carolyn Nordstrom’s explores the extra-legal network of crimes and activities which shape the global economy in the modern society. She probes how society camouflages crime, and if coupled with finance and societal influence, crime can produce valuable income, socially, financially, and culturally. In a quest to expose the evil deeds camouflaged in the society endorses some extraordinary legalization to gain economically (Ejimabo, 2015). The author highlights how multinational corporations infringe economic legality to garner more profit. The confessions by various residents, including gangsters and custom agents, portray infringement of the economic legality. Illegal mining is one of the extra-legal activities that are displayed in the ethnographical book, the most powerful in Angola engage in illegal mining with hefty profits since they get free labor from the oppressed miners. The minerals are furthered, smuggled out of the country hidden in the containers transporting other legal merchandise (Alvarez-Berríos and Aide, 2015). The government is aware of the existence of the illegal trades but is either unwilling or unable to cease such illicit trades. If the government attempts to eradicate the illicit trades, it will face the repercussions of such action either directly or indirectly. This essay explores the critical evaluation of illegal mining as an act, societal structures in which spurs illegal mining, and its consequences to the parties involved.

The government allies and the rebels are both involved in illegal mining in Angola. The government marked a portion of diamond mines as “no man's land” and allocated a part of it to itself while the other part belongs to the rebels. Although political rivals, the soldiers from both sides of the political divide work towards one course; to mine from their portion and not interfere with the political rival’s transport line (Nordstrom and Carolyn, 2007). The politically conflicting

troops are determined not to interfere with the transportation of the rival's group, which ensures the smooth running of the mining operations. Ideally, it is the responsibility of the military to manage transportation of good in Angola. Therefore if a troop affiliated to the government, for example, hampers trucks belonging to the rebels, they should expect a retaliatory attack from the rival's soldiers. A conversation between the author and Nod, a businessman, reveals that the military controls the trade and without the military's blessings, the soldiers burn the merchandise. The government's cooperation with the rebels, therefore, is an essential asset with mutual benefits for their mining both parties. Although the two political divides have contradicting beliefs and fight each other politically, they cushion their resources from political wars. In the book, research by Christian Dietrich to establish why political enemies rarely fight about resources, a confession by one of NGO workers affirms that war about resources will significantly affect the economic gain of the political elites (Alvarez-Berrios and Aide, 2015). The author established from an interview that the state garners a million dollar from dealings of the illegal diamond, which seals the economic network by the government. A considerable amount at the disposal of the government may aid the bribing of politicians and soldiers. The civilians are therefore left languishing in poverty with nobody to fight for their fundamental rights.

Illegal mining was established as an equilibrium between rivals during the war, probably as a way of taming the rebel's interference with the government involvement in illegal mining. The location of the illegal mines is far away from the diplomats, therefore reducing internal interference. In fact, to the outside world, the soldiers are busy fighting for the civilians and maintaining peace (Ejimabo, 2015). The parties involved choreographed the entire plan in a way that the process of legal mining to convince the diplomats that the soldiers were out on the war. The political elites choose already cleared lands for their productive activities; they acquire the

property by forceful relocating people who leave in places of high value. In a conversation between the author and Nod, for example, Nod narrates how the war forced them to relocate from one of the diamond-rich areas in Angola, Mata'lo (Nordstrom and Carolyn, 2007). He describes how the residents of Mata'lo lost all their property and relocated to a new place. After the wars, the residents believed that the mining sites were risky and required de-mining since they had explosives which hindered the military from protecting them. Therefore, the military took over the responsibilities of demining the risky areas take over the mining sites; not even the international NGOs could take over the role. The residents, consequently, forcefully relocated to a different area; never to return to their homes since that was illegal. In their new residence, they demined the land, cleared the bushes and cultivated the farms. Aid agencies supported them by building infrastructures like roads and runways and opening trade routes. Unfortunately, the internally displaced persons cannot enjoy the fruits of their work for long since a government displaces them again with a claim that it somebody unlawfully relocated to his land. They leave behind their homes and lands which the government official reclaims

The primary motivator to involvement in extra-legal trades in general and illegal mining, in particular, is the urge to acquire financial freedom and probably change existing financial status. Research by Aide (2015) postulates that many small scale miners engage in illegal mining (Alvarez-Berríos and Aide, 2015). The small scale miners may resort to the mines to harvest precious commodities which they can trade with essential needs that they require for their survival. Some small scale miners, however, work for the soldiers who expect to get diamond from them. The author reveals how the authority arrests some small scale illegal miners; who go to the mines for self-gain or to mine for the soldiers. Unlike small scale mining which provides for the basic needs of the miners, large scale's profit is enormous and can be a life-changer. The previous war

in Angola greatly motivated the establishment of illegal mining sites. The political elite had at easy access to the mines which the government declared as no manas “no man's land” The large illegal scale miners operate using sophisticated machines and garner huge profits (Nordstrom and Carolyn, 2007). The political elites mostly engage in such type of mining. In addition to investing in modern technology for mining, the elites also involve in creating ample links for smuggling the diamond out of the country. The deals the government had signed with the airline's operator facilitate the fast smuggling of the illegal diamond. The government puts in place the necessary infrastructural system that ensures that the illicit commodities are smuggled across the borders locally. The government has put the military in control the border checks to reinforce the security and ensure smooth smuggling of the illegally mined resources. The military has measures in place which ensure a seamless transportation process of the illegal commodities.

Carolyn Nordstrom’s remarkable use of primary sources of research to reveal the extra-legal network of crimes is commendable. Nordstrom, through ethnography, immerses herself (Ejimabo, 2015) to the economic war sectors and interacts with the stakeholders and the victims. She can observe the way of life of the people under her study. And get the actual unhampered information through interviews, interactions with them and observations. She carries out interviews with different informants, including the victims, smugglers, profiteers, and power elite; who occupy various economic war territories. Her compelling scrutiny unearths how extra-legal trades contribute significantly to the global economy. The author postulates a new structure for understanding 21st-century economic power and economics in general. *Global Outlaws* strategically exposes realities and misconceptions of security in trade and transport sectors and the unethical manners in which the stakeholders indulge in these extra-legal trades. Through informal interviews, the author is capable of getting honest first-hand responses from the people who

interact with her. The responses from her informants portray a society which is full of the extra-legal network of crimes with the government directly involved in the illegal trades. An interview with the local NGO worker, for instance, reveals that the civilians know about a government is direct involvement in illegal mining (Alvarez-Berríos and Aide, 2015). The revelation describes how the government and rebels made a deal to cushion the trade on the resources, and how the two rivals use possibly the same means to smuggle the illegally mined diamond abroad. She travels across the world to investigate how stakeholders make deals in different continents and how the customs officers manage the imports and exports in various countries she goes to Brussels, for instance, to establish how the empty fish trawlers ferry back smuggled goods to the country.

The government embraces the extra-legal trades done locally and internationally. Since the military controls the trades and transportation of the merchandise, no business can prosper without their consent. The businessmen, therefore, have to abide by the military's rules and expectations for them to run the businesses. All businessmen from cigarette vendors to diamond merchants know that the government, through the military are in charge of the country and therefore need the money to feed, and dress the soldiers, and keep the state's economy running. In the trip to Kalunga, the author determines that the businesses in that small town are lucrative but to enjoy the benefits; one has to cooperate with the soldiers, or else they lose their products (Nordstrom and Carolyn, 2007). Tiago gives an example of how the soldiers looted valuables from a shop of one of the rebels in Kalunga. The narrator believed that the beer would be traded for money or dollars apart from the soldiers drinking it. The author also portrays how travellers smuggle illegal goods; even local traders involved in illegal trades have diamonds and thousands of dollars at their disposal. Some small scale miners were working for the soldiers to pocket part of a fortune. In her ethnographical expose, Carolyn unearths how traders smuggle diamonds, drugs, and electronics in

the guise of transporting fish. The customs official in Brussels explains to her how the empty fish trawlers are essential in carrying some illegal goods, which are exchanged at sea among the ship crews (Alvarez-Berríos and Aide, 2015). According to the customs official, the fish trawlers on their return trip are floating supermarkets. In another instance, the traders put wrong labels on their merchandise s as to avoid high taxation. Although the government is aware of the malpractices by the traders, it is reluctant to take any action since the infringement of legality benefits its operations either directly or indirectly.

The dissemination of extra-legal trade networks has both positive and negative effects, depending on which group one is. The victims suffer the hugest blow; the offenders face the wrath of the law while the stakeholders enjoy all the benefits. In a quest to provide adequate productive areas for the political elites, the civilians forcefully relocate to a new area. Although aid agencies wish to demine the areas they are relocating to, the military refuses that tracts do not require demining (Ejimabo, 2015). After the residents worked hard to and tilled their lands, the government displaces them and owns the tracts of an already established area with transportation network. The civilians who get displaced for the second time have to move to another tract of land that should be cleared and planted. In the meantime, they have no food, and the Gov'nor offers the oppressed civilians an opportunity to work in his tomato plantations in exchange for food. The Gov'nor creates a reputable image and gets international humanitarian aid to support his quest to help the poor. While in reality, he gets free labor from the civilians and enjoys the benefits by himself. Thus the civilians' oppression yields benefits to the politically connected. In another narration by the victims of land mines, an amputated woman discloses how her life after the war was unbearable; having lost her limbs, she found it hard to acquire some essential human needs. She describes how she has to go to the river and forest to fetch water and firewood respectively.

In an attempt to be independent, the war victims pooled resources together and created habitable environments for themselves, planted crops and formed informal trade relations involving barter trade amongst them (Nordstrom and Carolyn, 2007). They decided to change their living standards and help themselves since they lost hope on the greedy government, which was engrossed in getting profits at the expense of the vulnerable civilians. The hardworking land-mine survivors decide to adopt a table banking technique which enables them to collect money. The women use the resources they pool together to establish small trades which involve diverse commodities, thus improving their economic situation. Although the government neglected the landmine victims, they came up with brilliant ways of empowering themselves and boosting their financial situation.

The offenders, on the other hand, face the wrath of the law. The legalization of illegal mining and trade leaves no room for those who want to defy the rules of trade. The businessmen are well connected, and they find information about the occurrence in society. It is incredible how Nod and Tiago know the year the author was born. She wonders that if Nod and his acquaintance were aware of her year of birth, is there a chance of anything happening without their knowledge (Ejimabo, 2015). The author, therefore, believes that there informants who alert the stakeholders of any suspicious occurrence in the region. The politicians who own some extra-legalized trades negotiate with service providers so that they can have a secure flow of their products. The Govo'nor, for instance, made a deal with the airlines operating in his region so that they can transport his tomatoes to Europe. The airlines accepted the deal, probably in fear of losing their license for flying to the region. The military controls the border checks of goods exported and the operations of some trades. The military, therefore, has put in place retaliatory measures against the offenders. The military, for instance, burns the trucks of rebellious business people. Nod, a businessman, affirms that it is impossible to do business without the blessings of the military.

Tiago also narrates to the author how the military troops brought large cargo flights and looted warehouses belonging to the rebellious businessmen. Tiago further, confirmed to the author that earlier the same year, the soldiers received beer as their earnings (Ejimabo, 2015). The prevalence of the soldiers not receiving their salary for months influenced the decision to allow them to earn their wages by looting. According to Tega, the troops preferred looting beer to local currency because they could trade beer with other commodities or even sell for dollars. The looting by soldiers is, therefore, a regular occurrence which is a means of getting their wages. They likely loot the commodities belonging to rebellious people while protecting the products of the people who cooperate with them, especially at the border checks.

The stakeholders reap the benefits of legalization of the extra-legal trade networks while the victims and offenders suffer. The author unearths how small scale and large scale business people benefit from the illegal trades. Their benefits range from owning liquid cash and precious minerals to living lavish and lucrative lifestyles (Alvarez-Berrios and Aide, 2015). The small scale traders have liquid cash and precious gems they smuggle from their trips. The truck drivers, for instance, reveal lots of dollars they have earned, and diamonds they acquire when embarking on the journeys. The money and diamond in their possession make the drivers think they are essential. Illegal trade also has huge monetary benefits and is much rewarding and satisfying. Nod, for instance, confessed that although he missed Mata'lo, he preferred staying at Truck Shop town since that was the "dollar generator." The author also describes how expensively some businessmen dress and drive expensive cars. A conversation between the author and Tiago unearths this. According to Tiago, in Truck Stop, people who owned little stores could drive fabulous costly cars, own expensive and sophisticated mobile phones, and dressed in the latest fashions from Europe. Tiago believed that the residents of Truck Stop had the right location

coupled with political support and right stuff. Although Tiago envies those who live in Truck Stop, he is also wealthy (Alvarez-Berríos and Aide, 2015). The author reveals that Tiago lives in an ordinary premise but has two expensive European made sports car, a brand-new luxury car, three small trucks, and dirt bikes in addition to the SUV he was driving. It is evident, therefore, that while the victims live miserable lives, and the offenders suffer losses; the stakeholders are the primary beneficiaries of illegal trade. They have a chance to live a lavish life, dress expensively, drive costly lives and live lavishly. Illegal mining, therefore, benefits the stakeholders who gain tremendous profits, thus improving their socio-economic status in society. Whether, on a large scale or small scale, illegal mining is a vital financial contributor to the stakeholder's lives and the economies of the world.

In conclusion, Carolyn Nordstrom explicitly portrays how crime, power and money contribute to global economic growth. The author employs primary sources to collect first-hand information from victims, stakeholders, custom officers and political elite through interacting with them and establishing first-hand information. The author explores how extra-legal trade networks are rampant in contemporary society and their enormous contribution to global economic growth (Ejimabo, 2015). Nordstrom explores the extra-legal networks evident locally, internationally through interactions with the people and interviews. She travels locally and internationally to carry out interviews with all the parties involved in the extra-legalized crimes. The interviews portray a society full of illegal trades, including mining; she brings out the networking of the stakeholders to implement the illegal mining and trading of diamonds. The book *Global Outlaws* is an exposé on how illegal mining benefits the stakeholders while impacting negatively on the victims and the offenders. The political elites and other shareholders oppress the victims who suffer a significant loss from the legalization of illegal mining and trades (Nordstrom and Carolyn, 2007). The systems

put in place to deal with the offenders are oppressive and impacts significant losses on whoever opposes the regime. The book, *Global Outlaws*, gives a new insight into the contributors to global growth and economics. The author unearths the various deals which are inexistent to the outside world but exist in society through camouflaged means.

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